

Message Text

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ACTION IO-10

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AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

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USINT ALGIERS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 28553

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EC, XF

SUBJECT: EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE

REF: (A) BRUSSELS 9279 (B) LONDON 15322 (C) PARIS 27602

1. QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR THE LEVANT ROUILLON TOLD US

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NOVEMBER 27 THAT THE EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE IS AT A STAND-

STILL. WITH ILL-CONCEALED DISAPPOINTMENT, HE SAID ARAB INSISTENCE ON A PLO OBSERVER ROLE IN THE GENERAL COMMITTEE (NOT IN THE WORKING GROUPS) HAD MET THE DETERMINED RESISTANCE OF PUBLIC OPINION IN SOME EC COUNTRIES TO ANY OFFICIAL PLO PARTICIPATION, THUS CREATING A TEMPORARY STALEMATE.

2. THE FRENCH INTEND TO CALL A MEETING NEXT WEEK OF EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVES HANDLING THE DIALOGUE TO SEE WHERE TO GO FROM HERE. ROUILLON BELIEVES THAT SUPPORT FOR THE DIALOGUE IS NOT SUFFICIENT IN EITHER EUROPE OR THE ARAB STATES TO ALLOW FOR ACCOMODATION TO THE PALESTINIAN REQUEST BEFORE JANUARY. HE THINKS A FORMULA WILL PROBABLY BE FOUND WHILE THE IRISH ARE IN THE EC CHAIR BUT WORRIES ABOUT IRISH ABILITY TO STIMULATE AND ORGANIZE A GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING. HE CLAIMED THAT NO WORK CAN BE DONE BY THE WORKING GROUPS, MOST OF WHOSE MEMBERS HAVE ALREADY BEEN CHOSEN BY PARTICIPATING STATES, UNTIL THE GROUPS ARE AUTHORIZED BY THE GENERAL COMMITTEE. THE FRENCH AND EC COMMISSION, MEANWHILE, WILL BE IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE LEBANESE, AS ARAB LEAGUE PRESIDENT, AND OFFICIALS OF THE LEAGUE ITSELF, HE SAID.

3. ROUILLON CHARACTERIZED THE PRESENT DISARRAY OF THE DIALOGUE AS "BAD FOR FRANCE, BAD FOR EUROPE AND BAD FOR THE ARABS." REFLECTING ON WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN, HE SAID THAT THE RESISTANCE OF CERTAIN COUNTRIES (READ THE U.S.) DELAYED THE DIALOGUE LAST JANUARY; RAMADAN AND THE RABAT ARAB SUMMIT ADDED FURTHER DELAY. HAD THE FIRST MEETING OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE TAKEN PLACE EARLIER, ROUILLON THOUGHT THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO PROBLEM WITH THE PALESTINIANS AND THAT THE EUROPEANS COULD HAVE REJECTED WITHOUT HARM TO THE DIALOGUE ANY SUBSEQUENT REQUEST FOR PLO PARTICIPATION.

4. COMMENT; ONCE ROUILLON'S CURRENT DARK MOOD HAS PASSED, HE CAN BE EXPECTED TO PURSUE AGAIN WITH VIGOR THE CONTINUING STRONG FRENCH INTEREST IN ADVANCING THE DIALOGUE.

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